13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas.

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger.

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and

[1] Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.